

Battle Scars

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Battle Scars by killerqueer

Category: IT (2017), IT - Stephen King

Genre: M/M, Pre-Relationship, Pre-Slash

Language: English

Characters: Richie Tozier, Stanley Uris

Relationships: Richie Tozier/St Stanley Uris

Status: Completed

Published: 2017-10-13

Updated: 2017-10-13

Packaged: 2020-01-26 13:25:02

Rating: General Audiences

Warnings: No Archive Warnings Apply

Chapters: 1

Words: 1,888

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

None of them had heard from Stan since the day they had all sworn to each other to return if It ever came back. They had thought he was joking when he told Bill that he hated him, but now they weren't so sure. Maybe he hated all of them. None of them could really tell since he wouldn't answer any of their calls or come to the door when they rode their bikes to his house and asked his parents if Stan was around.

All Richie really knew was that Stan Uris was not at all okay.

"also if you don't think richie tells stan that the painting lady scars are "battle scars" and "make you a fucking badass" daily you're wrong"

Battle Scars

Author's Note:

Hey friends! This one was a request from ephemeralprince on tumblr who wanted some Stozier, and it's based off of this text post: <https://hauntedkaspbrak.tumblr.com/post/165777367809/also-if-you-dont-think-richie-tells-stan-that-the>

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Stan was not okay. Well, none of them were really *okay* , Richie himself included, but they all seemed to be coping as best as they could. Sure, Richie would find himself knocking on Eddie's window most nights because he had a nightmare and couldn't sleep without his best friend there to comfort him. And then they would wake up again later in the night when Eddie woke from his own nightmares in a panic attack, and Richie would be there to hold up his aspirator for him.

Bill's stutter only seemed to have worsened after It had gone, and Ben had cried for days when Beverly had gone only a few days later. Mike had thrown himself into work at his grandfather's farm and Richie had seen him crying in the barn one day when he had gone to visit his friend on one of the last days before the school year started back up.

But they all still had each other. They were all still talking to each other.

None of them had heard from Stan since the day they had all sworn to each other to return if It ever came back. They had thought he was joking when he told Bill that he hated him, but now they weren't so sure. Maybe he hated all of them. None of them could really tell since he wouldn't answer any of their calls or come to the door when they rode their bikes to his house and asked his parents if Stan was around.

All Richie really knew was that Stan Uris was not at all okay.

This feeling was only solidified on the first day back to school. Richie and Eddie rode their bikes up to the bike rack where Bill and Ben were waiting for them.

“Huh-have either of you suh-s-seen S-Stan?”

“You know we haven’t, Bill,” Eddie said quietly.

“Yeah man, you were with us yesterday when we went to Birdboy’s house, remember?” Richie asked.

“I know his m-mu-mom said he w-wasn’t there, but I cuh-could see him sitting at his d-d-duh-hesk in front of his wuh-window,” Bill said, a pained and worried expression stretching across his face. “I just w-wish he would t-tuh-halk to us.”

“Come on guys, I’m sure he’ll come around.”

They all turned to look at Ben who was clearly trying his best to look reassuring, but it was obvious that even he didn’t fully believe what he was saying.

“Whatever, if he doesn’t want to talk to us anymore that’s his problem,” Richie said, locking his bike into the rack and trying not to let the others see how worried he was.

Before anyone had a chance to say anything else the bell had started ringing and they hurried inside to find their homerooms.

The first half of the day was mostly uneventful. It was their first day as high school students, so after going to their homerooms, the morning was filled with a bunch of boring orientation workshops and a stupid pep rally. Richie tried to pretend he wasn’t constantly looking over his shoulder for a glimpse of his friend’s curly mop of hair, but he had never been very good at being subtle.

It wasn’t until lunch that he had any idea as to whether or not Stan had even shown up.

Crash

Richie nearly jumped out of his skin as the sound of a body being slammed into a locker around the corner, the sound of familiar laughter echoing along with it.

“What the fuck happened to your face, loser?” came the grating sound of Henry Bowers’ voice. “Looks like somethin’ tried to chew it off or somethin’,” he continued mockingly.

Richie froze.

Crash

“Answer me, you little freak!”

Before he knew what he was doing, he sprang into action and ran the rest of the way down the hall and was face to face with the sight of Henry Bowers pinning Stan to the lockers behind him by the throat. Stan was gasping for breath and Richie could see the scars lining Stan’s face, still red and barely healed.

“Hey!”

His shout surprised even himself. Four heads suddenly whipped around to look right at him, and he almost froze up once more, but his eyes met Stan’s from down the hall and he took a deep breath and opened his mouth again.

“Let him go, asshole!” he shouted.

Henry let out a derisive laugh, and only tightened his grip on Stan’s throat. Stan was starting to let out a gurgling sort of noise, that made Richie almost cringe - his face was starting to change from red to almost purple.

Richie had fought off a goddamn killer clown this summer. He was not going to let Henry Bowers of all people scare him anymore. “I said, let him go!” he repeated, and this time charged down the hall at full speed towards Bowers.

Not surrounded by his usual gang, Henry had to drop Stan to keep Richie from knocking him over. Richie got one reassuring glimpse of Stan sinking to the ground, back still against the locker and a hand

coming up to rub at his throat before Henry grabbed him, ripping his attention from Stan, and head butted him right in the face.

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When Richie woke up, he was in a dark room lying on a lumpy, vinyl bed. His head was killing him. He groaned as he tried to sit up. "What the fuck..."

"You dumbass."

Richie jumped, turning to his left, only to see Stan sitting in a chair next to the bed he was on. He must have been brought to the nurses office.

"What the fuck were you thinking?"

'*What was I thinking?*' Richie thought indignantly.

"He was gonna kill you!" he said instead, and was only mildly affronted when Stan rolled his eyes at him.

"I don't need your help," Stan snapped, and Richie flinched slightly at the bitter tone in his voice. "I don't need any of you."

And now Richie *was* angry.

"Well did it ever occur to you that maybe we needed you?"

He got only a small bit of satisfaction at the sight of Stan's words dying in his throat, and stared at Stan expectantly.

"Well, did it?" he demanded. "If you're all *fine and dandy* that's just great, but if I'm gonna be real with you I'm *not* okay and neither is Eddie, or Bill, or Mike, or Ben. Bev is gone but I'm willing to bet you she's not okay either! We needed each other this summer. We needed *you* too."

"Screw you, Richie."

"What?"

“Screw you! I needed you all back at the Neibolt House and you all abandoned me! You abandoned me and now I look like a goddamn monster,” he continued, and Richie was so shocked by the words coming out of his friend’s mouth, that he almost didn’t see the tears starting to well up in Stan’s eyes.

“Fuck, Stan -- we didn’t *abandon* you, that fucking clown was splitting us up left and right! You should have seen the shit it did to separate Bill, Eds, and I the first time we went into that goddamn house.”

Stan still wouldn’t look at him.

“Come on, Birdboy,” Riche said, scooting over to make room for Stan on the hard plastic mattress. “Is this really about your scars from the painting lady? Those are fucking *badass* , dude.”

Stan snorted wetly.

Richie grinned. It was a start.

He grabbed Stan’s hand and pulled him out of the chair, noticing the fact that it didn’t take much effort to get Stan to do what he wanted him to do. He tried to keep his mouth shut for as long as he could but, being who he was, it didn’t last long. Stan started to sniffle and wipe the tears from his eyes and Richie couldn’t keep quiet any longer.

“Come on, Stan the man,” he said in his TV Host voice. “Let’s see ‘em!” he continued, turning to flick the lights back on, swelling with silent pride at the almost inaudible huff of laughter that Stan let out.

Richie turned back to Stan, and stared in awe at the red marks lining Stan’s temple and jaw. He reached a hand out to touch them and was broken from his reverie as Stan flinched.

“...Sorry, man,” he said, starting to pull his hand back, but was stopped by Stan grabbing it.

“No...” Stan, mumbled, looking down at Richie’s hand, looking confused as he did - as if he wasn’t sure why he had taken it or what he wanted. “Its...it’s okay,” he said finally, looking back up at Richie’s

face, seeming as though he had made a decision. "Um, you can uh...touch them...if you want to."

Richie did.

He reached out and let his fingers run across the bumpy irritated skin around Stan's face, watching as Stan screwed his eyes shut, nervously.

"These are so fucking cool, dude," Richie said seriously.

Stan opened his eyes, staring at Richie incredulously.

"Stop fucking with me, asshole. I know how ugly they are."

"I'm serious!" Richie exclaimed. "Is this really why you wouldn't hang out or talk to us all summer?"

"I didn't want anyone to see them," Stan mumbled, trying to look down at his lap, but just getting an eyeful of Richie's arm, his hand still on the side of Stan's face. "I tried convincing them to homeschool me, but they didn't have time."

"What? That's crazy, man!" Richie said, his hand finally leaving Stan's face to punch him in the arm. "Listen to me, Stan the man," he said, voice turning as serious as he could make it.

Stan looked up at him, suspicious of his change in tone.

"Those are battle scars," Richie said, grabbing Stan's hand in his, and smiling at the blush that was creeping its way onto Stan's cheeks. "They make you a fucking badass."

Stan laughed quietly, and shook his head. He started to pull his hand away, but Richie held fast onto it.

"For once in my goddamn life, I'm being serious Uris," Richie said staring straight into Stan's eyes. "This is not something you get to experience often so you better relish it while you have the chance," he said with a wink, smiling as Stan rolled his eyes again.

"S easy for you to say," Stan mumbled. "You're not the one walking

around looking like a freak. Everyone staring at your face, talking behind your back.”

“Fuck them,” Richie said seriously, grabbing Stan’s face with both hands pressed against the scars on either side. “We saved each one of their fucking ungrateful asses. To be honest, I’m pissed that you and Eds got a souvenir and I didn’t,” he said with a grin. “Don’t roll your eyes at me! Besides, you wouldn’t have to go through it alone if you’d just *talk to us*, man!”

“I hate you.”

“No you fucking don’t, dude,” Richie smiled, pulling Stan towards him and wrapping his arms around Stan’s back. “If you hated me you wouldn’t have dragged my sorry ass to the nurse’s office when Bowers knocked me out,” he mumbled into Stan’s neck.

In response, he just felt Stan’s arms lift from where they had been hanging limp at his sides to wrap around him in return.